whether products or processes in all fields of technology including micro-organisms, provided they are new, involve an innovative step and are capable of industrial application. The Agreement does not address issues concerning gene banks. In a revised patent regime ICAR and other laboratories in the country would have the same opportunities for seeking intellectual property protection for their inventions as are generally available.

Opposition to Dunkel Draft

695. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is considerable opposition in the country on the signing of Dunkel Draft as it may surrender the economic sovereignty of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof mentioning the merits and demerits of the Dunkel Draft; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to save the economic sovereignty of the country after signing the Dunkel Draft?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) The Uruguay Round results will on the whole be advantageous to us in increasing our exports. There will be increased market access opportunities for Indian goods as a result of lowering of tariffs and the phase out of the multi-fibre arrangement. The services agreement would also provide export opportunities. The rules govering multilateral trade have been strengthened. Though we will be required to amend our patents regime there are safeguards against abuse of patent rights by the holder. Our development policies are not constrained. Question of surrendering economic sovereignty does not arise. In any International agreement Sovereign nations can agree to certain conditionalities for advancing their mutual interest.

Growth of High Value Yielding Tobacco

696. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal to encourage tobacco farmers to grow higher value yielding tobacco;

(b) what directions have been given to the Tobacco Board to encourage farmers to make such a conversion; and

(c) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) to (c) Government has not received any such proposal. However, Government has been all along trying through the Tobacco Board to encourage farmers to improve the quality and productivity of FCV tobacco.

Joint Ventures with Uzbekistan

@697. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal for joint ventures and investment in Uzbekistan which had rich resources of coal, gas non ferrous metals and gold; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Government are generally encouraging and facilitating joint ventures in Uzbekistan as a part of the trade promotion strategy for that country, eight Indian joint ventures in Uzbekistan were approved during the last couple of

@Previously Unstarred Quartion No. 539. Transperred from 24.2.94.